4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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179 177 counter those of outside interests. The County Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 758 But another kind of development is here as well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

• [743] [423]

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDonick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 (563) As in 1965, education is still a major concern on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a black high school on the island. In the late 1960s

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Mr. Abraham Jenkins

THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open and close.

My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in 1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and s[illegible] intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I k[illegible] to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island t[illegible] Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

Mr. Abraham Jenkins

PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charleston—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands. Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

When some people became interested in the problems of migrant workers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Washington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks, the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

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Mr. William Saunders

THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 185 94 [734] [737] [665] I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston. The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 941 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of the nursing home and the housing. [734] [362]

Mr. William Saunders

THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] [464] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Corporation was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 758 943 [429] We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmental money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

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Mrs. Bernice Robinson

ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

Mrs. Ethel Grimball

WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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Doctor; and since the Proprietor never grudges a Doctor's bill, however large, he has a right to expect that the Overseer shall always send for the Doctor when a serious case occurs."[45] But the Overseer was cautioned against permitting persons to lie up when "there was nothing or little the matter with them."

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Many plantations had hospitals, or "sick houses," as the Negroes called them. The hospital on Prospect Hill plantation on Edisto Island was a brick building. Sir Charles Lyell found the hospital on Hopeton plantation in 1845 to consist of "three wards, all perfectly clean and well-ventilated." One was for men, another for women, and a third for lying-in women.[46] The hospital was in charge of the mistress of the plantation, or the overseer's wife, assisted by a Negro woman whose special task it was to look after the sick. Sir Charles observed that the Negroes refused to take medicine from any hands other than those of their master or mistress. When a Negro child was sick it was usually the mistress who sat up all night giving medicines rather than the mother. After Mrs. Trescot, of Barnwell Island, had been up all night nursing a Negro woman, she said to her English guest next morning, "When people talk of my having so many slaves, I always tell them that it is the slaves who own me. Morning, noon, and night, I'm obliged to look after them, to doctor them, and to attend them in every way."[47]

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Since the owner and his wife or his overseer attended to all the simple illnesses of his people, he sometimes attempted to school himself in medical knowledge. The

[45] *DeBow's Review*, XXI, 38; Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 116, 120.
[46] Lyell, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[47] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 141.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart.

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Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated.

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Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[66]

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The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857:

> To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[66] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

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among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attachment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his grave.[87]

INFANT WELFARE

The children's diseases were sometimes more disastrous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general precautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middleton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his island lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte* women on half task until confinement. Every planter who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely enjoyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a Negro woman,[88] for the woman's mistress herself seldom received such attention. In every group of plantation slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."